



18th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year B)



John 6: 24-35

When the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were at the place where Jesus had given the bread, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum looking for Jesus.

When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, “Rabbi, when did you come here?” Jesus answered them, “Very truly, I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For it is on him that God the Father has set his seal.”

Then they said to Jesus, “What must we do to perform the works of God?” Jesus answered them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.” So they said to him, “What sign are you going to give us then, so that we may see it and believe in you? What work are you performing? Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’”

Then Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”

They said to him, “Sir, give us this bread always.” Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.”

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Reflection:

Just after Jesus multiplied the five barley loaves and two fish, the crowd follow him to town. They are looking for more signs and wonders. “What are you going to do next?” They ask him. He tells them that he will give them “Bread from heaven”. Unlike ordinary bread, this bread will satisfy our hunger for good. The bread Jesus is talking about is the Eucharist we receive at Mass.



Table Discussion (at mealtime):

Jesus says: “I am the bread of life.” Take turns answering the question: “What do you think Jesus means when he says that?”

Bread Making (Family Activity):

Children love to bake things. Find a nice bread making recipe on the internet (you may have one of your own). Have the children measure out the ingredients and help knead the dough. You may want to roll the dough into three long tube like pieces that you braid, one over the other.

While you do all this, or wait for the bread to bake in the oven, talk about the importance of bread and how it is such a big part of our lives. You may even want to look up different types of bread (on the internet) and talk about which ones you would like to try out.



Volunteer to Bring up the Bread and Wine at Church:

This is a wonderful way to involve the children at Mass. The whole family could help in bringing up the gifts.

Storytime

Manna in the Wilderness (a bedtime story):

After God had rescued his people from slavery in Egypt, and the people escaped through the Red Sea on dry ground, they needed to cross through a mighty wilderness with very little water to drink or food to eat. When the little that they had ran out, the people began to complain. “How much longer until we reach the promised land? How much longer before we die of thirst or starve from hunger?”

They brought their complaint to Moses. “Why did God take us from the land of Egypt? We may have been slaves, but we always had plenty of food and drink. Did God bring us into the desert to kill us, to starve us for lack of food?”

Moses didn’t quite know what to do. So he brought their complaint before God. “Your people are beginning to complain,” he said. “They are ready to turn back to Egypt.” And, in fear that the people might turn against him, Moses implored God to do something quick.

“I will provide them with bread from heaven,” God replied. “Each day they will find a grain-like substance on the ground. Each person will be asked to collect it, enough to feed themselves and their

family. They shall eat this grain-like substance for the time they journey through the desert. I will look after them in their need.”

When the people woke up the next morning, the desert was covered with a grain-like substance they had never seen before. “What is it?” They asked, one to another. “I don’t know.” Was the usual reply. “This is a type of grain for bread,” Moses told them. “It was sent to you by God. Go, gather as much as you can for you and for your family. Those who gather much will never have too much, and those who gather little will never have too little.”

The people gathered the grain-like substance and called it “Manna”, a word that literally means: “What is it?”

The people also complained about water, there wasn’t enough to drink. When Moses brought their complaint to God, God responded by telling Moses to gather his people around a great huge rock that covered the desert floor. “Strike the rock!” God commanded Moses. “Strike it with the staff I gave you. Strike it only once, and I will provide them water to drink.”

Moses did as he was told. He gathered the people around the rock, and struck it once. To everyone’s surprise, the rock split open, and fresh water spewed out in great abundance.

This is how God provided for his people in the wilderness. Together with many other signs and wonders, God provided them with all their needs. Water, bread and even bird’s meat. God looked after them every step of the way.

Children might enjoy a video of the story. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ogfVBP35U-U>